

CLAIMS

Claim 1. Apparatus and software for establishing a bi-directional communication link between at least one customer and a large publicly accessible communications network such as the Internet, and for providing an online dual-commerce system, comprising:

a.) a browser device having network-browsing software

b.) network connection means

c.) network-user identification and verification means

d.) at least one networked computer, software and user interface representing at least one networked-venue, said computer and software of a type which provides a current databased selection of available online-choices and available networked-venue-choices of goods, or services, or activities, or combinations thereof,

e.) software and user interface suitable for

i. providing communications with said networked computer(s), and for taking, recording, and reporting customer orders from choices provided by said current databased selection

ii. making at least one order from said available online-choices

iii. making at least one order from said available networked-venue choices whereby said order(s)

is scheduled and reserved according to a current condition of a chronological table of scheduled and available customer-events;

is downloadable in the form of an itinerary by said customer; and

is subsequently culminated following the scheduled arrival of the ordering customer at a physical location of said networked-venue(s) that is designated for expedited service, following the verification of the customer's identification and order by suitable identification and order verification means located at the physical location(s)

iv. automated database-condition editing, monitoring and reporting which, is responsive to changes to said current databased selection when each online order is made, and when each online scheduled and reserved venue-order is made and subsequently culminated from said networked-venue(s); and which,

causes record-keeping and record-updating software routines to automatically record transaction details pertaining to said online order(s) and said scheduled and reserved order(s) and to update and report the availability of subsequent orderings, schedulings, and reservations to said current databased selection when any order is completed.

Claim 2. The browser device of claim 1 consisting of a handheld apparatus having wireless bi-directional connectivity to the Internet.

Claim 3. The browser device of claim 1 consisting of a computer and a modem.

Claim 4. The network browsing software of claim 1 consisting of a commercially available browser application.

Claim 5. The network browsing software of claim 1 consisting in the combination of a commercially available browser application and an Internet portal.

Claim 6. Said user interface of claim 1 wherein said interface comprises an Internet portal.

Claim 7. The network connection means of claim 1 consisting of an Internet connection made by an Internet Service Provider.

Claim 8. The identification and order verification means of claim 1 consisting of at least one commercially available customer identification and verification apparatus suitable for communication with said networked-computer.

Claim 9. The user interface and software suitable for establishing a communication link with said networked computer(s) of claim 1, further comprising at least one software routine for providing a customer with a printout record.

1 Claim 10. The ordering means of claim 1 further comprising at least one software routine for
2 automatically providing a networked-venue merchant with transaction details pertaining to his
3 venue's sales.

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5 Claim 11. The ordering, scheduling and reservation means of claim 1 further comprising at least
6 one software routine for automatically providing a networked-venue merchant with transaction
7 details pertaining to schedulings and reservations.

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9 Claim 12. The record-keeping and record-updating software of claim 1, further comprising at
10 least one software routine for automatically providing a supplier of a networked-venue with
11 transaction details pertaining to that venue's sales.

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13 Claim 13. The record-keeping and record-updating software of claim 1, further comprising at
14 least one software routine for automatically calculating and deducting a sales commission based
15 on the type of online order made.

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17 Claim 14. The ordering means of claim 1 further comprising at least one software routine for
18 facilitating the delivery of online order(s) of goods to a customer.

19
20 Claim 15. The networked-venue and networked computer and software of claim 1 further
21 comprising software routines for the confirmation of customer orders.

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23 ¹⁶ Claim 17. The networked-venue and networked computer and software of claim 1 further
24 comprising software routines for the verification of customer identification.

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26 ¹⁷ Claim 18. The customer identification software of claim 17 further consisting of at least one
27 commercially available networkable customer identification and verification apparatus.

28 ¹⁸ Claim 19. The browser device of claim 1 consisting of at least one networked computer located
29 at a physical networked-venue.

2 Claim ¹⁹~~20~~. The browser device of claim 1 consisting of at least one networked computer located at a facility which also incorporates a plurality of physical networked-venues.

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4 Claim ²⁰~~21~~. The dual-commerce apparatus of claim 1 further comprising software routines for
5 entering and recording financial transaction card information and for reporting transactions to at
6 least one financial transaction card vendor.

7
8 Claim ²¹~~22~~. The browser device of claim 1 consisting of at least one networked computer located
9 at a physical networked-venue, said computer having a user interface that is similar in
10 appearance and offers functionality similar to, an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) including
11 means for reading, recording and reporting financial transaction card information.

12
13 Claim ²²~~23~~. The networked-venue of claim 1 further comprising a secured retail-inventory
14 environment wherein networked workstations are arranged to secure an inventory of
15 merchandise in an optimized workstation system such that said inventory is consolidated in a
16 space-saving manner and is out of reach to customers until purchased, and wherein each of said
17 workstations:

- 18 a.) comprises a networked computer having connectivity to at least one network, and
19 has a user interface to facilitate transactions and interactions,
20 b.) has networked order-taking apparatus and software routines to facilitate user
21 financial transactions and for reporting and recording said transactions,
22 c.) has record-keeping and record-updating software routines to automatically record
23 transaction details pertaining to any workstation order and to update and report
24 the availability of merchandise, according to the order(s) made.

25
26 Claim ²³~~24~~. The optimized networked workstation system of claim 23 further comprising an
27 automated merchandise pick-and-place system for secured retail inventory comprising:

- 28 a.) at least one motion-control computer with motion-control software that is
29 networked to the workstation system
30 b.) a multiplicity of securely located merchandise slots that are vertically aligned in
31 columns and horizontally aligned in rows

- 1 c.) at least one computer-accessible record of the vertical position and horizontal
2 position of each said merchandise slots
3 d.) at least one updateable computer-accessible record of the vertical position and
4 horizontal position of of said merchandise slots and the type of merchandise
5 stored therein
6 e.) at least one computer-accessible record of the vertical position and horizontal
7 position of a receiving end of each workstation delivery chute located adjacent to
8 each workstation
9 f.) a motion controller interface coupled between said motion-control computer(s)
10 and electro-mechanical actuators
11 g.) at least one motion-controllable member that is positionable by said actuator(s) in
12 a horizontal axis having a pick-and-place robotic apparatus operative from an end
13 thereof that is positionable in a vertical axis by said actuator(s)
14 h.) an electro-mechanically actuated merchandise gripping means that is positionable
15 to securely grip merchandise and move it in and out of any merchandise slot and
16 to also move it into a receiving end of any workstation delivery chute
17 the combination of which is responsive to user input with, and control signals from, at
18 least one computer that is networked to the workstation system to provide:
19 i. stocking, retrieval and re-stocking of merchandise; and
20 ii. automated delivery of said merchandise to a user's workstation chute by
21 accessing at least one of said computer-storable record and communicating
22 the record data to said motion-control computer for the computer-controlled
23 positioning of said member(s), said pick-and-place robotic apparatus, and
24 said gripping means
25 iii. merchant input from a networked computer for automated pick-and-place
26 control of inventory.

27
28 *RP* Claim 25. The automated merchandise pick-and-place system for secured retail inventory of
29 claim 24 further comprising rapid inventorying apparatus comprising at least one emitter-
30 detector light sensing means that is positionable by computer motion-control to sweep in a
31 controlled path past merchandise slots and interpret the difference in light reflectivity of vacant

1 container slots and container slots occupied with merchandise, and rapidly scans slot-empty
2 states or slot-occupied states and records, maintains and reports all state-conditions of the
3 inventory to said record-keeping and record-updating software.

4
5 Claim ²⁵~~26~~. The networked-venue of claim 1 further comprising a secured entertainment-content
6 replication environment and retail-inventory wherein networked workstations are arranged to
7 secure entertainment-content replication equipment and an inventory of merchandise in an
8 optimized workstation system such that said equipment and the product of thereof, and said
9 inventory, is consolidated in a space-saving manner and is out of reach to customers until
10 purchased, and wherein each of said workstations:

- 11 a.) comprises a networked-computer having connectivity to at least one network, and
12 has a user interface to facilitate transactions and interactions,
13 b.) has networked order-taking apparatus and software routines to facilitate user
14 ordering and financial transactions pertaining to said product and said inventory
15 and for reporting and recording said transactions,
16 c.) has record-keeping and record-updating software routines to automatically record
17 transaction details pertaining to any workstation order and to update and report
18 the availability of merchandise, according to the order(s) made.

19
20 Claim ²⁶~~27~~. The workstation system of claim 23 further comprising at least one ATM style
21 workstation which adjoins an exterior wall of the networked-venue and provides workstation
22 functionality.

23
24 Claim ²⁷~~28~~. The workstation system of claim 23 wherein each of said workstations has hi-speed
25 connectivity and provides interactivity with the workstations of at least one other workstation
26 system.

27
28 Claim ²⁸~~29~~. The customer ordering means of claim 1 further comprising multimedia-playback
29 software routines and at least one type of multimedia content for facilitating customer
30 transactions with the playback of said multimedia content.

1 Claim ²⁹~~30~~. The customer ordering means of claim 29 wherein the multimedia-playback means
2 features multimedia content having meaning that is relevant to the context of customer
3 transactions and interactions, and is synchronous thereto, and helps to facilitate order decisions.

4
5 Claim ³⁰~~31~~. The apparatus and software of claim 1 wherein said at least one computer consists of
6 at least one networked server computer and software having a communication link with at least
7 one client computer and software.

8
9 Claim ³¹~~32~~. The dual-commerce system of claim 1 wherein said physical location of said
10 networked-venue(s) designated for expedited service, is schedulable up to 100% flow rate of
11 scheduled customers.

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13 Claim 32. The dual-commerce system of claim 1 wherein said physical location of said
14 networked-venue(s) designated for expedited service, is scalable to accommodate increased
15 scheduled customer flow rates.

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17 Claim 33. The optimized networked workstation system of claim 23 wherein each of said
18 workstations provide software and hardware means for browsing, previewing, ordering,
19 uploading, and keeping a computer-accessible record of order transaction details pertaining to
20 orders for, and uploadings of, medialess digitally-recorded entertainment-content such as MP3
21 (Mpeg 3) files that are ordered and received by customers having networked communication
22 with said system.

23
24 Claim 34. The networked communication of claim 33 consisting in bi-directional communication
25 between said workstation(s) and at least one wireless handheld device suitable for receiving
26 digitally-recorded files.

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28 Claim 35. The networked communication of claim 33 consisting in bi-directional communication
29 between said workstation(s) and at least one coupled handheld device suitable for receiving
30 digitally-recorded files.

1 Claim 36. The customer identification and order verification means of the networked-venue(s) of
2 claim 1 further comprising bi-directional communication link with at least one wireless handheld
3 device.

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5 Claim 37. The apparatus and software of claim 1 further consisting of means for a customer
6 download said itinerary to a wireless device.

7
8 Claim 38. A dual-commerce method enabling a customer to place online orders over a network
9 such as the Internet including orders that are schedulable and reserveable and provide a customer
10 scheduled excursion to at least one networked-venue which offers deliverables that the customer
11 has ordered online, comprising the steps of:

- 12 a.) establishing a bi-directional communication link between a customer browsing device
13 and a large publicly accessible communications network such as the Internet, and at
14 least one dual-commerce networked-venue represented at an Internet portal site
- 15 b.) accessing a current databased selection of available online-choices, and available
16 networked-venue-choices of goods, or services, or activities, or combinations thereof,
17 available to the customer(s) both online and from at least one physical location of said
18 networked-venue(s)
- 19 c.) establishing a communication link with at least one networked computer(s) at said
20 networked-venue(s)
- 21 d.) accessing software and user interface for making choices pertaining to said current
22 databased selection and for making at least one order from said choices online
- 23 e.) accessing customer ordering, reservation and scheduling means for making choices
24 pertaining to said current databased selection and for making and recording at least
25 one order from said choices online which is schedulable and reserveable according to
26 a current condition of a chronological table of scheduled and available customer-
27 events
- 28 f.) making at least one networked-venue order online, downloading an itinerary which
29 when followed subsequently completes the order with the scheduled arrival and
30 interaction of the customer at said physical location of said networked-venue(s) that is
31 designated for expedited service, following the verification of the customer's

identification and order by suitable identification and order verification means located at the physical location

g.) automatically updating current databased selection when each online order is made, and when each reserved and scheduled order is made and subsequently culminated from said networked-venue(s), and causing record-keeping and record-updating software routines to automatically record transaction details pertaining to said online order(s) and said scheduled and reserved order(s) and to update and report the availability of subsequent orderings, schedulings and reservations to said current databased selection when any order is completed.

Claim 39. Dual-commerce system for establishing a bi-directional communication link between at least one customer and a large publicly accessible communications network such as the Internet, comprising:

a.) a browser device having network-browsing software

b.) network connection means

c.) network-customer identification and verification means

d.) at least one dual-commerce networked-venue represented by at least one networked computer and software, said computer and software of a type which provides a current databased selection of available merchandise, or services, or activities, or combinations thereof, available to said customer(s) both online and from at least one physical location of said networked-venue(s)

e.) software and user interface suitable for

i. providing communications with said networked computer(s), and for taking, recording, and reporting customer orders from choices provided by said current databased selection

ii. making at least one order from said available online-choices

iii. making at least one order from said available networked-venue choices whereby said order(s)

is scheduled and reserved according to a current condition of a chronological table of scheduled and available customer-events;

is downloadable in the form of an itinerary by said customer; and

1 is subsequently culminated following the scheduled arrival of the ordering
2 customer at a physical location of said networked-venue(s), following the
3 verification of the customer's identification and order by suitable identification
4 and order verification means located at the physical location(s)

- 5 iv. automated database-condition editing, monitoring and reporting which,
6 is responsive to changes to said current databased selection when each online
7 order is made, and when each online scheduled and reserved venue-order is made
8 and subsequently culminated from said networked-venue(s); and which,
9 causes record-keeping and record-updating software routines to automatically
10 record transaction details pertaining to said online order(s) and said scheduled and
11 reserved order(s) and to update and report the availability of subsequent
12 orderings, schedulings, and reservations to said current databased selection when
13 any order is completed.